

Frequently Asked Questions: Alcohol, Tobacco, & Other Drug (ATOD) Education (Act 51)

Why do staff need this training?

The relationship between ATOD use and school failure and/or success is well established. Teachers need a sufficient awareness of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) prevention strategies to perform the following functions within the school:

- Support a school policy and climate that builds resiliency in kids and fosters preparedness for rigorous learning;
- Identify students with ATOD issues, talk with them in a helpful way and refer them to appropriate school/community resources as necessary;
- Bolster student's social skill development, help students learn how to resist substance use and support the implementation of research-based prevention curricula required by State Board Rule 4213.1.

Who is required to attend an Act 51 training?

State Board Rule 4213.2 states that, "Schools shall provide for training of school staff such that **teachers and health and guidance personnel** have a sufficient level of professional development to enable them to competently teach or provide other services required in the school's alcohol and drug abuse prevention education program." The Department of Education *recommends* that **all new staff receive training within their first two years of teaching** and that **experienced staff update their skills every five years** in order to stay current on pharmacology, brain development, intervention strategy and behavior change theory.

Why do elementary school staff need this training?

This training isn't only about students using substances. The content covers topics such as prevention, resiliency, other risky behaviors, chemical dependency in the family, societal and personal attitudes. These issues impact all children in Vermont. When problems like these are addressed early in a child's life they assist them in coming to school ready to learn and help them make healthier decisions.

Are schools required to choose state sponsored trainings?

The law states that the Department of Education "Shall provide pre-service, and in-service training programs for school personnel on alcohol and drug abuse prevention." The DOE has developed Act 51 Training Objectives and recommended training activities, Trainer Competencies, a recommended Trainer Continuum and a menu of Professional Development Offerings. The Center for Health and Learning (healthandlearning.org) serves as a referral source for expert level trainers and training materials. Schools may use other qualified trainers as long as they teach required topics listed in State Board Rule 4200. In spring 2006 a Trainer of Trainers will be offered to train local Act 51 Trainers.

Whom do I contact for registration or further information?

The Center for Health and Learning (CHL) offers a calendar of statewide training events and on-line registration: www.healthandlearning.org. You can also contact CHL by phone (802) 254-6590 or by fax (802) 254-5816. Flyers are sent to all schools announcing training opportunities.

What does this training cover?

This training provides essential concepts for school-based prevention and intervention. It covers the nine topic areas required by Act 51: Pharmacology; Chemical Use, Abuse and Dependence; Chemical Dependency and the Family; Societal and Personal Attitudes; Policy and Legal Issues; Support and Referral Systems for Students in Distress; Curriculum Development, School Climate; and Drinking and Driving. In addition, the training makes links between ATOD use and violence, suicide, pregnancy, injury, car crashes and other unintentional injury or death.

Why is this a 15 hour training?

Trainer and participant experience indicates that this much time is needed to adequately address the complex and critical concepts, knowledge and skills outlined in the curriculum. The hours can be used toward re-licensure. In addition, one academic credit is available for teachers who want it.

Why are Orientations recommended?

State Board Rule 4213.2 states that “In addition to providing for training of school staff...There shall be an orientation for the entire school community on its intent and alcohol and drug issues in general. It is recommended that qualified school personnel provide an orientation for all staff at a faculty meeting each year that includes at a minimum an overview of the schools ATOD Policy and a review of the support referral protocol.

Other questions? Please call:

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